

## Message Text

PAGE 01 NATO 00574 01 OF 03 031941Z

43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 PM-03 INR-07 L-02 ACDA-05 NSAE-00 PA-01

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 SS-15 NSC-05 /056 W

----- 009857

O R 031730Z FEB 75

FM USMISSION NATO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9889

SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO USCINCEUR

USNMR SHAPE

CINCLANT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 USNATO 0574

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, NATO, UK

SUBJECT: UK DEFENSE REVIEW

REF: USNATO 0520

MISSION TRANSMITS (LESS ENCLOSURES) TEXT OF MCM-4-75, SUBJECT:  
MILITARY COMMITTEE ASSESSMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM DEFENSE  
REVIEW 1974, WHICH MC APPROVED IN SPECIAL MEETING FEBRUARY 3.

ACTION REQUESTED: GUIDANCE BY BRUSSELS OOB FEBRUARY 5 AS  
REQUESTED REFTEL.

BEGIN TEXT

INTRODUCTION

1. AT THEIR MEETING ON 3 DECEMBER 1974, THE DEFENCE PLANNING  
COMMITTEE REQUESTED THE NATO MILITARY AUTHORITIES TO PREPARE  
AN ASSESSMENT OF THE MILITARY IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSED  
RESTRUCTURING OF THE UNITED KINGDOM ARMED FORCES AS THIS  
SECRET

PAGE 02 NATO 00574 01 OF 03 031941Z

AFFECTS NATO. IN ACCORDANCE WITH ESTABLISHED PROCEDURES (REFER-  
ENCE) THE MAJOR NATO COMMANDERS HAVE SUBMITTED THEIR ASSESSMENTS  
TO THE MILITARY COMMITTEE. THESE ARE FORWARDED AT ENCLOSURE I  
(SACEUR) AND II (JOINTLY FROM SACLANT AND CINCHAN) AND SHOULD

BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE FOLLOWING MILITARY COMMITTEE ASSESSMENT. HOWEVER, THE INFORMATION PRESENTED IS AS YET INCOMPLETE AND LEAVES CERTAIN GAPS IN THE MATERIAL AVAILABLE FOR THE MILITARY ASSESSMENT.

#### MILITARY COMMITTEE CONSIDERATIONS

2. WHEN INITIATING THE PROCESS OF CONSULTATION, THE UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT MADE IT CLEAR THAT THERE WAS FIRM DECISION TO REDUCE DEFENCE EXPENDITURES AS A PROPORTION OF GNP. THE UK SECRETARY OF DEFENCE STATED "THIS PLANNED REDUCTION IN THE LEVEL OF OUR NATIONAL RESOURCES, WHICH WE DEVOTE TO DEFENCE IS REGARDED BY MY GOVERNMENT AS A FIRM DECISION. BUT WITHIN THAT CONSTRAINT, WE ARE READY TO LISTEN TO COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS ON THE BEST WAY IN WHICH THE CONTRIBUTION WE FEEL WE CAN MAKE TO NATO CAN BE BEST DEPLOYED". THE MILITARY COMMITTEE WELCOMES THE OVERRIDING PRIORITY GIVEN BY THE UNITED KINGDOM TO ITS NATO CONTRIBUTION IN FORMULATING THEIR PROPOSALS, AND NOTES THAT THE RESULTS OF THE PRESENT PROPOSALS TAKEN AS A WHOLE REFLECT THIS PRIORITY.

3. THE MILITARY COMMITTEE WISHES TO DRAW PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO AND ELABORATE ON THE FOLLOWING MAJOR FINDINGS CONTAINED IN THE MAJOR NATO COMMANDERS' ASSESSMENTS.

#### STRATEGIC RESERVE

4. THE OVERALL EFFECT OF THE REDUCTIONS IN THE UK CONTRIBUTION TO NATO'S STRATEGIC RESERVE CAPABILITY COUPLED WITH THE OVER 50 PCT LOSS IN AIR TRANSPORT FORCE WOULD BE A SERIOUS IMPAIRMENT OF SACEUR'S FLEXIBILITY TO RESPOND TO A CHANGING SITUATION OR TO TAKE INITIATIVES, ESPECIALLY IN THE EARLY STAGES OF A CONFLICT.

#### NORTHERN REGION

5. THE PRIMARY CONCERN AS REGARDS THE NORTHERN REGION IS THE  
SECRET

PAGE 03 NATO 00574 01 OF 03 031941Z

DRASTIC CUT (BY SOME 75 PCT) OF THE READILY AVAILABLE, REAPIDLY DEPLOYABLE REINFORCING AND ASSAULT FORCES WHICH MIGHT BE COMMITTED IN THE REGION. NOTING THE LIMITED NUMBER OF AVAILABLE LOCAL TROOPS, THESE REDUCTIONS MIGHT SEVERELY TAX THE ALLIED CAPABILITY TO DEFEND AGAINST MAJOR AGGRESSION AND HOLD CRITICAL AREAS UNTIL THE ARRIVAL OF OTHER REINFORCEMENTS. IF THE REDUCTIONS CANNOT BE MADE GOOD BY OTHER ALLIES IT MUST BE REGARDED AS A SERIOUS DEGRADATION OF NATO'S CAPABILITY IN THIS REGION.

SECRET

PAGE 01 NATO 00574 02 OF 03 031927Z

43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 PM-03 INR-07 L-02 ACDA-05 NSAE-00 PA-01

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 SS-15 NSC-05 /056 W

----- 009732

O R 031730Z FEB 75

FM USMISSION NATO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9890

SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO USCINCEUR

USNMR SHAPE

CINCLANT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 3 USNATO 0574

CENTRAL REGION

6. IT IS SACEUR'S VIEW THAT THE NET EFFECT ON UK FORCES WHICH MIGHT BE EMPLOYED IN THE CENTRAL REGION DOES NOT SEEM SIGNIFICANT. HOWEVER, SACEUR STATES THAT THE POTENTIAL WEAKENING OF THE CAPABILITIES OF THE NORTHERN REGION COULD HAVE A TACTICAL IMPACT ON THE DEFENSIVE CAPABILITIES OF THE NORTHERN ELEMENTS OF AFCEUR IN EVENT OF WAR. THE CENTRAL REGION WOULD ALSO BE AFFECTED BY THE REDUCTION IN THE UK STRATEGIC RESERVE CONTRIBUTION. THE MILITARY COMMITTEE IS HOWEVER HOPEFUL THAT THE REORGANISATION OF BAOR MAY COMPENSATE THIS TO SOME DEGREE.

SOUTHERN REGION

7. THE IMPACT FOR ACEUR ON THE SOUTHERN REGION WOULD BE VERY SERIOUS. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE WITHDRAWAL FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN OF THE UK DESTROYERS, MCM VESSELS, MARITIME PATROL AIRCRAFT, THE LOSS OF AIR AND LAND FORCES REINFORCEMENT CAPABILITIES AND THE REDUCTIONS IN UK AIR FORCES STATIONED IN MALTA AND CYPRUS WOULD BE GRAVE. THE DEFENSIVE POSTURE OF THE REGION WHICH IS ALREADY LIMITED WILL BE FURTHER REDUCED. THE EFFECT OF THE WITH-  
SECRET

PAGE 02 NATO 00574 02 OF 03 031927Z

DRAWAL OF THE LONG-STANDING UK PRESENCE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN WOULD EXTEND FAR BEYOND THE WAR FIGHTING CAPABILITY. IT WOULD DEAL A SEVERE BLOW TO THE STABILITY OF THE REGION AND MIGHT WELL LEAD TO A SERIOUS DEGRADATION OF THE DETERRENT AND DEFENCE ARRANGEMENTS THROUGHOUT THE REGION UNLESS THE LOSS IS MADE GOOD BY JOINT AND CONCERTED EFFORTS OF OTHER MEMBERS.

ATLANTIC AND CHANNEL AREAS.

8. THE PLANNED UK REDUCTIONS OF THEIR MARITIME FORCES IN THE EASTLANT/ACCHAN REGION, IF IMPLEMENTED IN TOTAL, WOULD SERIOUSLY AFFECT A REGION WHERE NATO CAPABILITIES ARE ALREADY AT A CRITICAL LEVEL. THE FORECAST SHORTFALL OF UK FORCES ASSIGNED TO THE MARITIME COMMANDERS AND THE ENVISAGED CUT IN WEAPON DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IS A CAUSE FOR THE GRAVEST CONCERN.

9. THE PLANNED REDUCTIONS OF ACLANT/ACCHAN ASSIGNED ASW AND MCM FORCES GIVE REASON FOR PARTICULAR CONCERN. THE MEASURES PROJECTED BY THE UK AUTHORITIES WILL NOT ONLY RESULT IN A GENERAL DEGRADATION OF THE CREDIBILITY OF NATO'S MARITIME DETERRENT POSTURE BUT WILL SERIOUSLY AFFECT ACLANT/ACCHAN'S ASW AND MCM CAPABILITIES AND WILL IMPAIR PROSPECTS FOR THE SUCCESSFUL ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE ESSENTIAL TASK ASSIGNED TO THE MARITIME MAJOR NATO COMMANDERS OF ENSURING THE TIMELY ARRIVAL OF REINFORCEMENTS AND SUPPORT INCLUDING MILITARY SUPPLIES AND VITAL CARGOES TO ACE. AS JUDGED BY THE MARITIME MAJOR NATO COMMANDERS, THE PLANNED DRASTIC REDUCTION IN MCM FORCES WILL SERIOUSLY JEOPARDIZE THE CAPABILITY TO KEEP CLEAR ALL THOSE ROUTES NECESSARY FOR VITAL CARGOES INCLUDING MILITARY SUPPLIES, AND THE PORTS AND APPROACHES NECESSARY TO CONTINUE OPERATIONS. THE REDUCTIONS IN FORCES TO SACLANT/CINCHAN MAY SERIOUSLY AFFECT SACLANT'S ABILITY TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO ACE. OTHER POINTS OF CONCERN ARE THE REDUCTIONS IN AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT CAPABILITY TO THE NORTHERN FLANK AND ISLANDS COMMANDERS AND THE REDUCTION IN CAPABILITY FOR OPERATIONS F UK FORCES AND CONTROL OF SHIPPING OUTSIDE THE NATO AREA.

GENERAL

10. THE MILITARY COMMITTEE FULLY SHARES AND CONCURS WITH THE CONCERN OF THE MAJOR NATO COMMANDERS OVER THE DAMAGE THAT WOULD  
SECRET

PAGE 03 NATO 00574 02 OF 03 031927Z

OCCUR TO THE NATO DEFENCE POSTURE IF THE UK PROPOSALS WERE IMPLEMENTED. ALTHOUGH THE UK CONTRIBUTION TO NATO WILL CONTINUE TO BE SUBSTANTIAL, THE OVERALL EFFECT OF THE UK PROPOSALS WOULD REPRESENT A MAJOR REDUCTION OF NATO'S DEFENCE CAPABILITY IN ACE AND IN THE ACLANT/ACCHAN AREA, AND WOULD CORRESPONDINGLY WEAKEN NATO'S CONVENTIONAL MILITARY CAPABILITY  
VIS-A-VIS THE WARSAW PACT.

11. ALTHOUGH THE UK GOVERNMENT HAVE INDICATED THAT THEIR PROPOSALS REPRESENT THE MAXIMUM LEVEL OF RESOURCES THEY ARE PREPARED TO DEVOTE TO DEFENCE, THE MILITARY COMMITTEE, AFTER CONSIDERING THE WEAKENING OF THE NATO DETERRENT AND DEFENCE POSTURE IF THE UK PROPOSALS WERE TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN FULL, FEELS IT NECESSARY TO URGE THE UK AUTHORITIES TO RECONSIDER THAT DECISION. AS A MINIMUM THOSE ASPECTS WITHIN THE PLAN WHICH WOULD CAUSE THE MOST SERIOUS DAMAGE TO THE ALLIED DEFENCE CAPABILITIES SHOULD BE RE-EXAMINED.

12. THESE AREAS OF SPECIAL CONCERN, NOT LISTED IN ORDER OF  
PRIORITY ARE:

SECRET

PAGE 01 NATO 00574 03 OF 03 031937Z

43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 PM-03 INR-07 L-02 ACDA-05 NSAE-00 PA-01

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 SS-15 NSC-05 /056 W

----- 009810

O R 031730Z FEB 75

FM USMISSION NATO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9891

SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO USCINCEUR

USNMR SHAPE

CINCLANT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

S E C R E T SECTION 3 OF 3 USNATO 0574

A. THE REDUCTION IN READILY DEPLOYABLE REINFORCING AND  
ASSUALT FORCES IN THE NORTHERN REGION.

B. THE REDUCTION IN REINFORCEMENT CAPABILITY AND THE  
NON-AVAILABILITY OF READILY DEPLOYABLE LAND AND AIR REINFORCEMENTS  
IN THE SOUTHERN REGION.

C. THE DISAPPEARANCE OF UK MARITIME AND AIR FORCES IN THE  
MEDITERRANEAN AND THE LIKELY CONSEQUENCES.

D. THE DECLINE IN THE GENERAL MARITIME CAPABILITIES  
INCLUDING ASW AND MCM IN EASTLANT/ACCHAN AREA AND AMPHIBIOUS  
FORCES IN THE EASTLANT ARE.

BY IMPROVING THEIR PROPOSALS IN THESE RESPECTS THE UK COULD  
PREVENT THE MOST DAMAGING EFFECTS OF THE PRESENT PLAN FROM  
OCCURRING. IT IS RECOGNIZED THAT THE DEPLOYMENT OF UK LAND AND  
AIR REINFORCEMENTS TO THE SOUTHERN REGION MIGHT REQUIRE AIR  
LIFT SUPPORT FROM OTHER SOURCES, I.E. OTHER ALLIES OR CIVIL  
AIR.

SECRET

PAGE 02 NATO 00574 03 OF 03 031937Z

13. EXAMINING THE INFORMATION PROVIDED UP TILL NOW ON THE NEW UK DEFENCE PROGRAMME, THE MILITARY COMMITTEE RECOGNIZES THAT THERE REMAIN SOME AREAS WHICH ARE UNRESOLVED. THE ASSESSMENTS PROVIDED BY THE MAJOR NATO COMMANDERS DEAL WITH THESE UNRESOLVED AREAS IN MORE DETAIL. THE MILITARY COMMITTEE WISHES TO HIGHLIGHT ONE ASPECT IN THIS FIELD. WHILE THE MAIN QUANTITATIVE CHANGES PROPOSED FOR THE UK FORCES ARE DESCRIBED, SUFFICIENT INFORMATION HAS NOT BEEN PROVIDED CONCERNING THE EFFECTS OF THE BUDGET CUTS ON THE PLANNED MODERNISATION AND REPLACEMENT PROGRAMMES FOR THE THREE SERVICES. THIS LACK OF INFORMATION IN CERTAIN FIELDS SOMEWHAT RESTRICTS THE SCOPE OF THE ASSESSMENTS AND PREVENTS A FULL, IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF ALL CONSEQUENCES RESULTING FROM THE UK DEFENCE REVIEW.

#### CONCLUSIONS.

14. THE WIDE RANGE OF THE BRITISH DEFENCE REVIEW AFFECTS MORE SERIOUSLY THAN ANY PREVIOUS REVIEW THE CAPABILITY OF ALL THREE MAJOR NATO COMMANDERS. IN SPITE OF ITS CONCENTRATION ON GIVING PRIORITY TO THE NATO AREA IT IS BOUND TO BE VIEWED WITH DEEP CONCERN. THE PROPOSALS WILL SEVERELY REDUCE NATO MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, AND ALLIED REINFORCEMENT CAPABILITIES AND FLEXIBILITY THROUGHOUT ALLIED COMMAND EUROPE THUS CONTRIBUTING TO A WEAKENED DEFENCE POSTURE. THIS CANNOT FAIL TO INFLUENCE THE WARSAW PACT PERCEPTION OF NATO SOLIDARITY AND RESOLVE, AND THUS THEIR PERCEPTION ON DETERRENCE IN ACE.

15. THE UK HAS ALWAYS PROVIDED AN INDISPENSABLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE ATLANTIC/ARCTIC AREA. THE PROPOSED REDUCTIONS WOULD DIMINISH THE CREDIBILITY OF NATO'S MARITIME POSTURE WHICH IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE OVERALL ALLIED DETERRENT. THE PLANS PROPOSED BY THE UK PROVIDE FORCE LEVELS WHICH ARE BELOW THE LEVEL OF EXISTING COUNTRY PLANS AND IN MANY CASES, FAR BELOW NATO FORCE GOALS. THIS WILL HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE ASW AND MCM CAPABILITY WHICH THE MNCS REQUIRE TO ENSURE TIMELY REINFORCEMENT AND SUPPORT OF ACE.

16. BY RECONSIDERING SOME OF THE PROPOSALS THE UK COULD LESSON THE ADVERSE IMPACT IN CERTAIN AREAS WHERE A FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF EXISTING PLANS WOULD HAVE THE MOST DAMAGING EFFECTS.

SECRET

PAGE 03 NATO 00574 03 OF 03 031937Z

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

17. WHILE FULLY AWARE OF THE FINANCIAL RESTRICTIONS LAID DOWN BY THE UK GOVERNMENT, THE MILITARY COMMITTEE AFTER CONSIDERING THE OVERALL EFFECTS OF THE PRESENT PROPOSALS, RECOMMENDS THAT THE UK AUTHORITIES BE URGED TO RECONSIDER THEIR DECISION ON THE LEVEL OF FUTURE DEFENCE RESOURCES. AS A MINIMUM THOSE ASPECTS OF THE NEW DEFENCE PLAN THAT HAVE THE MOST DAMAGING EFFECTS ON THE OVERALL ALLIED DEFENCE POSTURE SHOULD BE REVIEWED IN

ORDER TO:

A. MAINTAIN A UK MARITIME AND AIR PRESENCE IN THE  
SOUTHERN REGION;

B. RAISE THE FORECAST LEVEL OF UK CAPABILITIES IN THE ASW  
AND MCM FIELDS IN THE ACLANT/ACCHAN AREAS;

C. INCLUDE AN OPTION FOR DEPLOYMENT TO THE SOUTHERN REGION AMONGST  
THE TASKS ENVISAGED FOR THE UK LAND AND AIR FORCE CONTRIBUTIONS TO  
SACEUR'S STRATEGIC RESERVE;

D. INCREASE THEIR CAPABILITIES FOR EFFECTIVE AND TIMELY  
REINFORCEMENT OF THE NORTHERN REGION BEYOND THE CURRENT  
PROPOSALS.

18. THE MILITARY COMMITTEE ALSO RECOMMENDS THAT THE UK  
AUTHORITIES BE INVITED TO CONTINUE THEIR CONSULTATIONS WITH NATO  
MILITARY AUTHORITIES WITH THE AIM OF FINDING SOLUTIONS WHICH MEET  
THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN PARAGRAPH 17.A.-D. ABOVE.

END TEXT

BRUCE

SECRET

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 18 AUG 1999  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** n/a  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 03 FEB 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** ElyME  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975NATO00574  
**Document Source:** ADS  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** 11652 GDS  
**Errors:** n/a  
**Film Number:** n/a  
**From:** NATO  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1975/newtext/t19750286/abbrzhyr.tel  
**Line Count:** 349  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE  
**Office:** n/a  
**Original Classification:** SECRET  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 7  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** SECRET  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** USNATO 0520  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** ElyME  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 17 SEP 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** WITHDRAWN <17 APR 2003 by ShawDG, REFER TO DOD>; RELEASED <17 SEP 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <22 SEP 2003 by ElyME>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
05 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** UK DEFENSE REVIEW  
**TAGS:** MPOL, NATO, UK  
**To:** STATE  
SECDEF INFO USCINCEUR  
USNMR SHAPE  
CINCLANT  
LONDON

**Type:** TE

**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006